

## Erection of wind turbine, Mains of Loanhead, Old Rayne, AB52 6SX



Cameron Archaeology Ltd  
23 November 2011

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

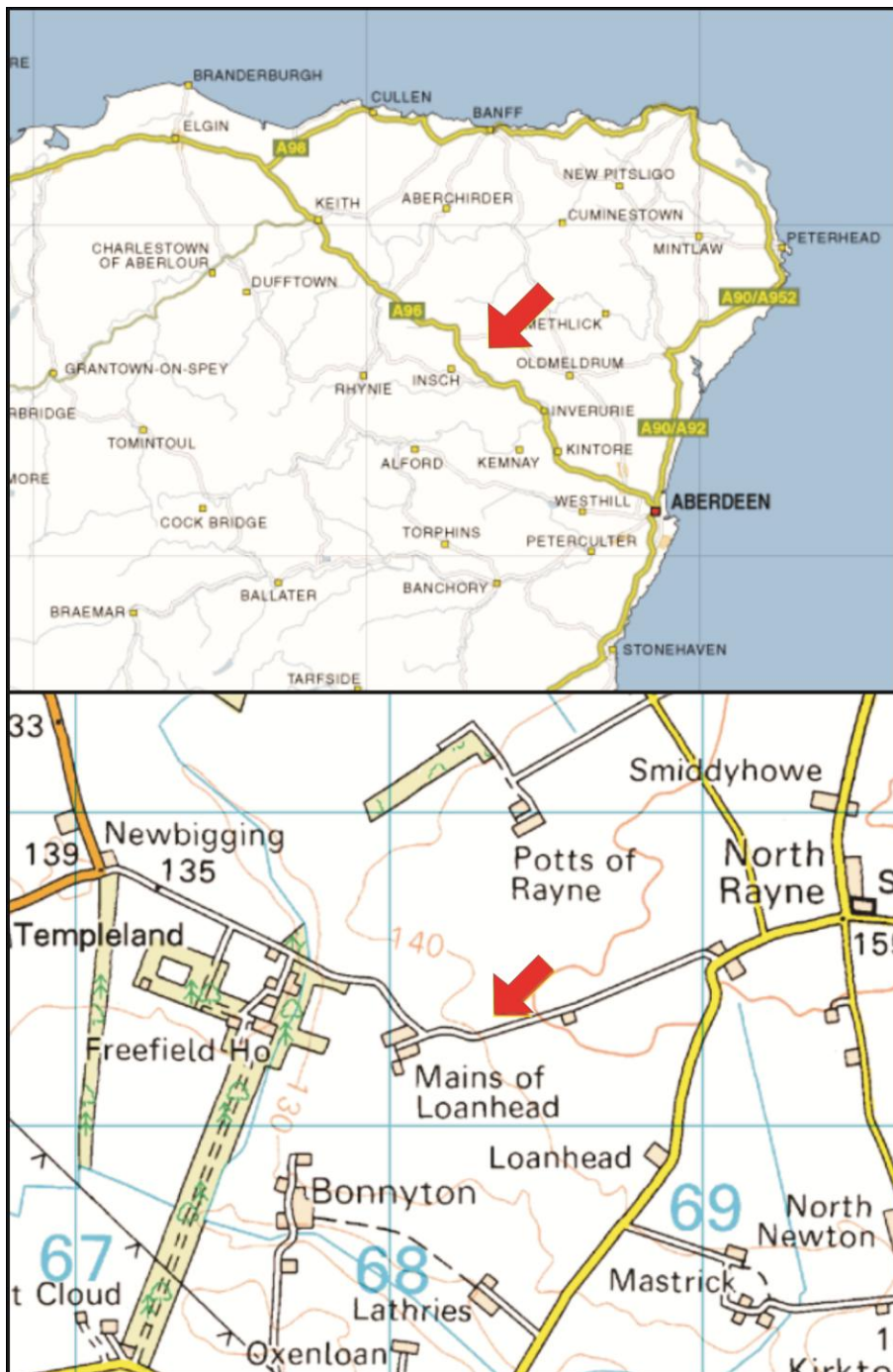
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## SUMMARY

A watching brief was carried out on 22 November 2011 to observe the topsoil removal for the base of a wind turbine. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This is a report on a watching brief carried out on 22 November 2011 at Mains of Loanhead, Old Rayne, AB52 6FX, Aberdeenshire prior to the installation of a 20kw wind turbine. The Aberdeenshire planning reference is G/APP/2011/03052; condition 11 requires an archaeological watching brief on the soil strip of the trench for the wind turbine only which includes a report and entry in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland. The site is in Rayne parish and the NGR for the mast is NJ 31329 68382; it lies at 130-140m OD. The work was commissioned by AT & JG Stephens, Mains of Loanhead, Old Rayne, AB52 6FX. The watching brief was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) Planning Advice Note (PAN 2/2011) and Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), which state that archaeological remains should be regarded as part of the environment to be protected and managed.



Ill 1 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2010).

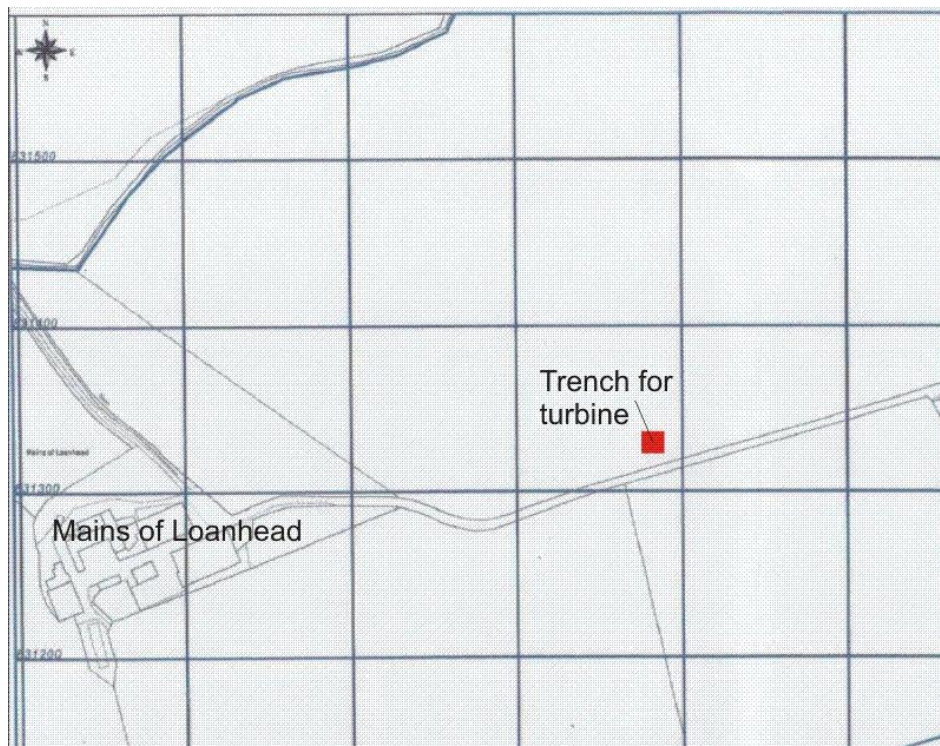
## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are two stone axes (ABDUA: 19865, 16012) from Mains of Loanhead farm in Marischal Museum, Aberdeen (NJ63SE 152). No information about their exact find-spot is recorded.
- 2.2 Spy Hill, an artificial mound 12.2m in diameter and 6 high is c 200m NW of Mains of Loanhead. It was excavated in c. 1870 revealing a beaker placed on a pedestal of slate or thin stone (NJ63SE 18). There were 'various minor finds' but no cist (Proc Soc Antiq Scot 1881). The beaker was donated to the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (NMAS), but was not found by Mitchell (1934).
- 2.3 An alleged Roman road (NJ63SE 177) may underlie a minor modern road, which runs by Mains of Loanhead (NJ 6810 3130), Newbigging (NJ 6700 3190) and joins the modern A920 public road at Cairn Hill (NJ 6681 3257). This road follows the line of temporary marching camps from Normandykes (NO89NW 71), Kintore (NJ71NE 28) and past this site to Durno (NJ62NE 31) (Crawford 1949, 115).
- 2.4 The Bishop's Palace at Old Rayne (Aberdeenshire SMR no NJ62NE2) is the site of the former summer residence of the Bishop of Aberdeen of which nothing remained in 1845. It is believed to have been built for Bishop Alexander Kyninmund who was made Bishop in 1329-40. The lands of Rayne were granted to the bishopric in 1137. It was built on a slight rise and surrounded by a moat. The north and east areas of the moat remain as a well ploughed-down depression, about 1.5m maximum depth and it apparently enclosed an area about 60.0m diameter. Following the granting of planning permission in 1990 for a house on part of this moated homestead, a small excavation revealed the remains of a substantial medieval earthwork, steep-sided on its inner face and with a more gradual slope to the outside with an ankle-breaker at the base. The ditch was 2m deep by 6m at widest. Sherds of 14th century pottery were recovered from low in the ditch-fill. Only a small area, 6.50m by 3.50m, of the top surface of the mound was excavated but this revealed several post holes and a drainage ditch. A series of complicated layers were found towards the south-east corner of the trench, while a number of large stone roofing slabs and some mortar-bound stones were found on the south edge of the excavated area, towards the inner part of the mound. A few medieval pottery sherds were also found here. This site was most likely a homestead moat rather than a motte. School sits on top of site. Proposed housing development at this site in 2008 led to an evaluation (Murray 2008).



### 3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

A watching brief was carried out on Monday 19th September 2011. The topsoil which was 0.2m deep was stripped from a trench 5 x 5m in size (Ill 2) using a tracked machine and flat-edged ditching bucket. The subsoil was hard, compact clay. No archaeological features or finds were recorded during this work.



Ill 2 Plan showing location of the wind turbine trench (copyright Mr and Mrs Stephens).



Ill 3 Trench showing natural subsoil cleaned, with Bennachie in background (facing SW)

## 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that no further archaeological work is required at this site; this is subject to advice from Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service.

## 5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Mr and Mrs Stephens, Mains of Loanhead and Bruce Mann, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Services.

## 6 REFERENCES

Crawford, O G S (1949) Topography of Roman Scotland north of the Antonine Wall, Cambridge, 115.

Mitchell, M E C (1934) 'A new analysis of the Early Bronze Age beaker pottery of Scotland', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol.68, 175.

Murray and Murray, HK and JC 2008 'Bishop's Manor, Old Rayne, Aberdeenshire (Rayne parish), evaluation and excavation', *Discovery Excav Scot, New*, vol.9 Cathedral Communications Limited, Wiltshire, England, 27.

PSAS 1881 'Donations to and purchases for the Museum and Library, with exhibits', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol.15, 193-4.

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## APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

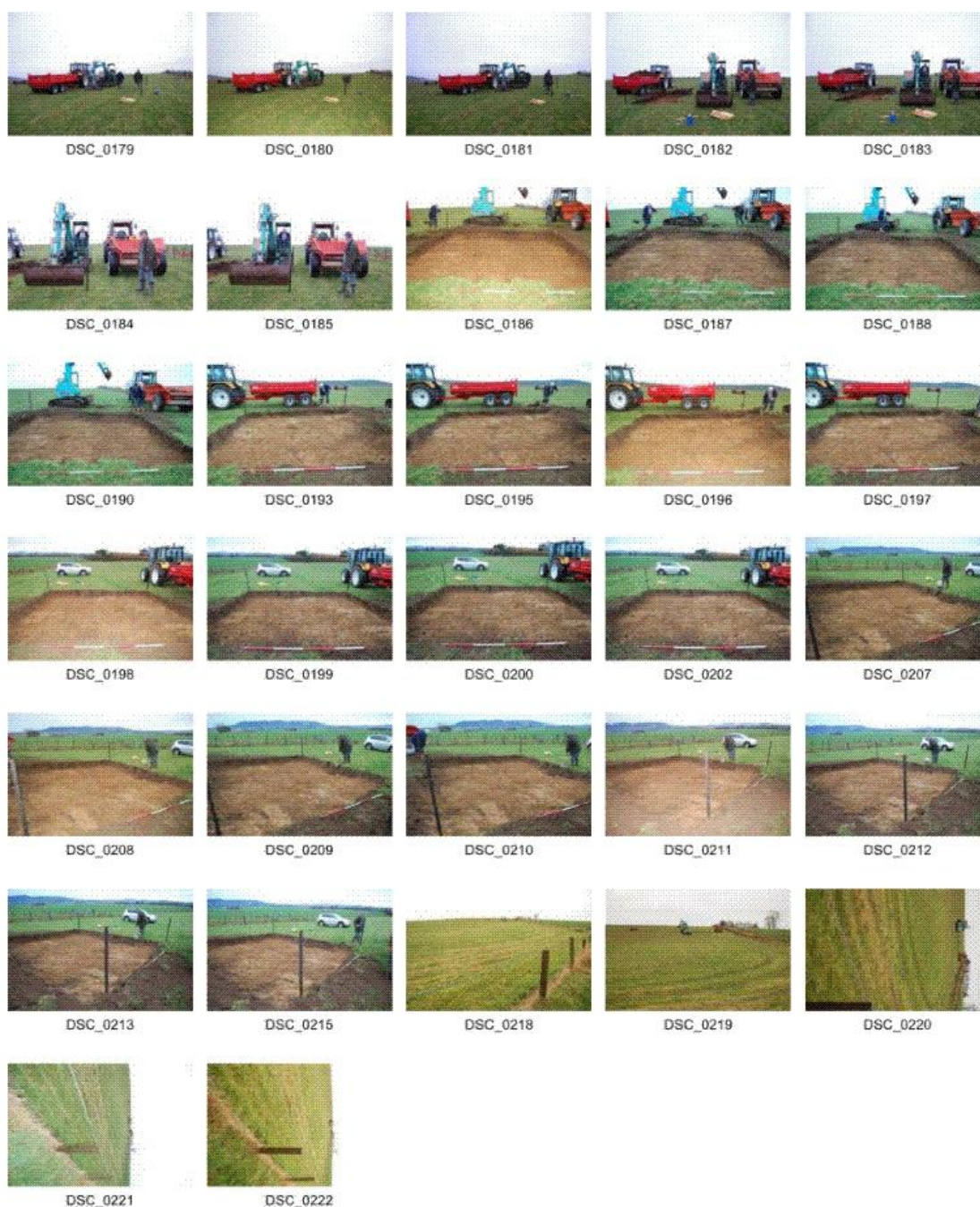


Photo no	Description	Facing
DSC_0179-185	Trench cleaned on natural subsoil	E
DSC_0186-190	Trench cleaned on natural subsoil	E
DSC_0191-197	Trench cleaned on natural subsoil	N
DSC_0198-202	Trench cleaned on natural subsoil	W
DSC_0203-210	Trench cleaned on natural subsoil	SW
DSC_0211-215	Trench cleaned on natural subsoil	SW
DSC_0218-222	Trench location	E